The *Great Question* to be Considered by the KING, and this approaching PARLIAMENT, briefly proposed, and modestly discussed:

(To wit)

How far Religion is concerned in Policy or Civil Government, and Policy in Religion? With an Essay rightly to distinguish these great Interests, upon the Disquisition of which a sufficient Basis is proposed for the firm Settlement of these Nations, to the most probable satisfaction of the several Interests and Parties therein.

By one who desires to *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsars, and to God the things that are Gods.*

THat this Nation, and the Nations of *Scotland* and *Ireland* concerned with it, are at present in such a posture, and under such circumstances, as give just reason both of fear and care more then ordinary both to Rulers and People, is so without doubt, that it needs no proofs; and that we are in a dangerous Feaver, in regard both to our Civil and Religious Interest, all in these wits must know: which Disease, albeit it be now in the opinion of most come to a Crisis, yet few can determine whether it will end in a natural cool, or prove a distemper yet more dangerous and deadly. And truly, as this time we are so far happy, that though the Evil be great which threatneth us, yet the Cause thereof is very manifest, so that we are not put to the disadvantage of an uncertain search in that matter. We see all this trouble proceeds from a pretence of Religion, and Opinion that men have drank in, that for and because of Religion, they ought to concern themselves in the Civil Government of the Nation, yea so far as to overturn it, if otherwise the advancement of their Religion cannot be procured. How much this Opinion, albeit managed by men vastly differing as to the Religion they would advance, has wrought to the shaking of these Nations, few can be ignorant of: so that it seems high time, and no season more opportune then now, that this Question were fully decided, *What is the Interest of Religion in Policy or Civil Government? and again, of Policy and Civil Government in Religion? And how far men upon the account of Religion may and ought to meddle in the Government, or with the Governours; and again, how far the Civil Magistrate, as such, ought to concern himself in the Consciences of the People?* that if possible, such Principles may be pitched upon, agreeable to the nature of Christianity, and to the soundest Principles of Government, by which men may be possessed with a Faith, that Christianity doth not oblige them to meddle in Government, and reciprocally that they may be the more quieted in that belief, that the Magistrate is not to concern himself in their Consciences: so that in this mutual assurance, the Magistrate may rule securely, and administer Justice to all equally, without fearing hurt from the Religion of any of his people; and the people may fear God, and follow piety, according to the best of their knowledge, without fearing prejudice from the Magistrate therefore. And truly it cannot but be acknowledged, that it would be a happy Nation where this were fully fixed, and the establishing of such Principles seems the less difficult, that in the purest times of Christianity, (so reported by all) the true Christian Religion was not at all hurtful nor dangerous to the Magistrate, though differing from it; nor did the Christians judge it any part of their Religion, to seek to disturb him in his Government, or force themselves into it: and though again they acknowledged his Authority in Civils to be just and lawful, yet they claimed an exemption from being imposed upon by him in the exercise of their Consciences: so that a re-establishing of these Principles and Practices which were believed and followed by those who on all hands are affirmed to have been the purest Christians, and also good and faithful Subjects, will be the business

But for the more clear understanding of this matter, it will be fit to take it a little higher, and enquire how those two great Interests of Religion and Civil Government came to be interlaced and mixed together. *Cain* was the first that disturbed Civil Society, because

secular of Religion; and the Scripture, from which alone we may expect it, gives no account of any thing, but the joining of the Sincerests before the Flood; and after the Flood, the whole tract of the *Hebrew* History from *Heber* to *Moses*, (for of the particular state of the *Israelites* till then, I shall speak anon) plainly shews, that the matter of Religion was wholly distinct from the outward Policy and Government then used in the World. *Jacob* lived in *Laban*'s Family, though a stranger in that, and *Joseph* among the *Egyptians*, with which Superstitious Nation we cannot suppose he joyned in Worship, and yet was both a faithful Friend to *Pharoah*, and considerable Ruler over the People. Moreover, if the true ground and rise of Government be considered, this will more appear; for all Lawyers and Politicians ground the first grounds of Government from the Posterity of *Noah*'s Sons after the Flood, and do shew how through necessity, Reason and the Law of Nature led them thereunto; for the Law of Nature giving to every man a natural and paternal Jurisdiction over his own Family, when as the increase of Mankind, and necessity of Commerce, gave occasion for several Families to be conjoined together, and that these concernments begot Controversies needful to be determined, and that every Family stood upon equal foot as to Authority, and to decide by Force would prove destructive, and not necessarily be just, and that it was unfit every man should be Judge in his own cause; therefore Reason led them to chuse them of approved Justice and Honesty, to whom all differences were remitted, and whose decisions served as Laws, and were readily submitted to, the parties resting in the assurance of their equity: and this all Lawyers generally acknowledge was the first foundation of Civil Government, in the joint agreement of several Families; from whence arose the Institution of Cities, and from their interest in the Country about, the division of Provinces and Kingdoms. Now as in the first part of Government in Families, the Authority stood in one, viz. in the Father of the Family; so they usually chose out for the Government of joint Families, who thence were called *Kings*; and thus was the Original of Monarchy, when the opinion of Honesty, Knowledge and Justice, first and chiefly with no fear of Emulation advanced to that dignity, whose Judgment and Will answering to the ends of their Advancement, was a Law to the People. After ages when they perceived those Rulers or Kings, and the advantage thence accruing increased, men began to be ambitious of the Employment, and from thence to use their utmost endeavours to obtain it; from which followed Faction and often Bloudshed, which made men fall upon the expedient to settle the Government upon the Children of those who formerly had possessed it, the veneration of their Fathers and the supposition and expectation they might inherit their Fathers virtues greatly contributing thereunto which laid the foundation of Hereditary Monarchy. But when the Primitive Honesty and Integrity of their first Kings began to wear out, and their whole Kings did succeed and advance the Authority they derived from their Predecessors, but lost their Equity and Justice; and since the ancient and entire confidence put in the first Rulers, had made their Governments, and consequently their Successors, unlimited, it depending upon Will, and not qualified by any Laws, whereof those were not written at that time. Thus Monarchy degenerated into Tyranny, as appeareth in *Nimrod*, and the Successors of the Kings of *Assyria*, which gave arise, as many judge, to the Institution of Common-wealths, as sought the Grievance and redress.

Now during these times, although the number of those that truly feared God, and retained any sense of pure Religion, were exceeding few, and for most part at least so far as is contained in the Family and Succession of *Abraham*; yet there was and universal Testimony to Deity, implanted in the hearts of all men, (as all sorts of Christians acknowledge) and so far and more, as to the chief thoughts about Religion; for as *Cicero* says, *Nulla Gens tam fera, nec tam immanis quæ non Deum agnoscat*. Since it is most certain that Justice will gain a Testimony to the hearts of the most barbarous, the ancient Patriarchs and whom to be their Justice and Piety to their Primitive Rulers, being fixed in mind and heart, upon the deprivation of their Successors, and this compared with the benefits afforded to mankind by the Gods, began to beget those Opinions of those Gods Kings to arise from whence they came to be worshipped. And thus the Original and Progress of Idolatry to convey to Posterity, as the Egyptian, and all Nations, and the Reason why to be adored, from whence sprung the Religion of Worshipping Dead Men, and also why Divine Power and Domination over all the World, should be ascribed to Kings, and why to be received. Now whereas Religion among the Gentiles had its rise from the Kings of Nations, so every Nation had their Gods, Altars, Sacrifices, and Rites, among which they were devoted to the Worship of their Kings, and Religion and Policy grew inseparably, insomuch that the Priesthood

generally esteemed it a duty to worship the Gods of that place and Country they came in, as judging they had a sort of distinct and peculiar Jurisdiction there; so there was little occasion of observing here a distinct Interest, because there was no man to claim the liberty of exercising it: so far had blindness and Idolatry overgrown the World. In which state things continued for many Ages, until *Daniel* and the Three Children, after the carrying away of the *Jews* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, gave a rise rightly to distinguish and clear the Marches betwixt Religion and Policy, and claim the liberty of the one, without prejudice to the other: for this making Religion necessary to Policy, took its strength from the unlimited Tyranny of the *Assyrian* Monarchy, and was the fruits of an Arbitrary Power, standing and exercised in the superlative degree; (and it's observable, that where there is most of that sort of Government there this, to this day, most prevails; this being most suitable to meer Tyranny, and contrary to a solid and well-ballanced Government:) for such being the state of the *Assyrian* Monarchy, as all well read therein know, the Flatterers of these Kings possessed them with a belief, that the Authority of no Power even in matters of Religion, was to be acknowledged, nor even the Counsel of any Deity sought to, above or besides that of the King; for they did not build the reason of Obedience upon the intrinsical verity of the thing commanded by the King, as those that press the same thing now would seem to do, or for shame pretend to do; but meerly upon the Will and Command of the Prince, whom they think ought not to be disobeyed, whatever he commanded, whose Will they would have to be the only rule of men's Actions in all things: Hence came the fury of *Nebuchadnezzar* against the Three Children, for not obeying him, *Dan.* 3. in falling down before his Golden Image; and against *Daniel*, for praying with the Windows open towards *Jerusalem*; for neither of them are charged for doing any thing prejudicial to the State, and except in this, were found faithful Servants to the King in other things wherein they were imployed. And as none will readily justifie the *Assyrian* King in his doings wherein himself greatly repented, so the Imployments he bestowed upon those and other *Jews*, and wherein they proved useful and faithful to him, doth sufficiently shew, that the distinct Interests of *Religion* and *Policy* under one Prince, may well be found without prejudice either to Prince or People. The like may be observed in the case of *Ahasuerus*, who was influenced by *Haman* to give out an Edict for the destruction of the *Jews*; the reason whereof urged by *Haman* was, that they had Laws different from the Kings Laws, and therefore it was not for the Kings profit to suffer them. I need not bestow pains to refute *Haman's* reason, since most men will condemn it.

The same thing took place for the same cause in *Nero*, and the rest of the Emperors who persecuted the Christians; for the piety and ancient equity and sobriety of the *Romans* wearing out, and the corruption, degeneracy and effeminacy of the Eastern Nations prevailing, so as the Emperors would be reputed and adored as Gods: thence came their endeavouring to oblige men to acknowledge no God but their Will and Pleasure, and no Religion but what depended thereon; thence they made Religion a necessary part of Government. And thus I have briefly traced things until such time as Christianity came to be established by Law, and Christians came to be Magistrates.

After that Christianity came to be received in the Courts of Princes, and that the Emperors became Christians, their honest zeal was soon abused by the corruption and covetousness of the Clergy, who for their own ends first possess'd them with a belief that they ought to seek to settle and establish Christian Religion by their Force and Power, and that in it much conduced to their Spiritual advantage to have large Revenues upon the Clergy, and that as supreme Magistrate he had cares and superintendency over the Church; in meddling with which the Emperor *Constantine* found himself quickly not a little embarassed, when he could not find a way to satisfie the Clergy, when they came to quarrel among themselves; and so each Party afterwards in the differences of these Times, as they could draw the Emperor to their side, made use of this Power of the Magistrate in matters of Religion, for the destruction each of other: until at last by the growing of Superstition, and other great shakings which happened to the *Roman* Empire, the Pope instead of being subject to the Emperor, and appointed by him, (which he or a successor several Centuries) made a shift to turn him by degrees out of *Italy*, establish to himself a Temporal Jurisdiction in *Rome*, as being for so the *Roman Territory*, and at last not only to be independant from the Emperor, but superiour to him, as by the track even of their own Historians is manifest, and known to all those who have read the story of *Hildebrand* and others. And thus by the like means several Bishops in *Germany* and other places, through the zeal and ignorance of the people, came into the possession of great Temporal Jurisdictions;

distions; and not only so, but in all Nations of *Europe* they obtained a place in the Government, and became a distinct State; by means of which, having an immediate dependance upon the Pope, he came to exercise an Universal Monarchy in the Christian World: And thus Religion came to be a part of Civil Government among Christians.

And it is greatly to be regretted, that in the Reformation this was not rooted out, but in a great measure retained not only by the *Lutherans*, but even by the *Calvinists*: So that although those who follow the *Geneva* Discipline, do pretend to abstract the Clergy from meddling in State, yet their method of proceeding proves at last the same; for while they lay an obligation upon the Magistrate, under pretence of taking care for the Cause and Church of Christ, to establish one sort of form of Religion, and ruine all others; wherein he must steer by the Clergies Compass, or otherwise have the people blown up unto a Sedition from the Pulpit: So that experience hath proved, that under the Government of Presbytery, (especially as it was improved in *Scotland*, where it came to its height) the insolency and imperiousness of the Clergy became no less troublesome and unsupportable to the Magistrates, then that of Bishops, whether Papal or Protestant; so that it is manifest, the altering from one form to another, hath not cured these Nations of the mischiefs that therethrough has attended them, so long as that fundamental Error is entertained, of making Religion a part of the Civil Government. Now this brief Historical hint doth abundantly shew, how these Interests are distinct, and ought not be jumbled together: To which I shall add these brief Considerations.

First, Because Religion and Policy, or Christianity and Magistracy, are two distinct things, have two different ends, and may be fully prosecuted without respect one to the other; the one is for the purifying and cleansing the Soul, and fitting it for a future state; the other is for the maintenance and preserving of Civil Society, in order to the outward conveniency and accommodation of men in this World. A Magistrate is a true and real Magistrate, though not a Christian; as well as a man is a true and real Christian, without being a Magistrate. Christianity, far less this or that form of it, doth not belong to the being of Magistracy; else the Apostles and Primitive Christians could not have acknowledged the Heathens to have been their lawful Magistrates and Superiors, as they did, and taught their Disciples so to do, as appeared in the practice of the Primitive Christians beforementioned.

Secondly, Christ says expressly, *his Kingdom is not of this World*; the thing he came for is a business distinct from the external Government of the World, and hath no necessary connexion thereto; and therefore there doth not appear any one saying of his or his Followers, to warrant Magistrates as such to meddle in Religion, or to warrant his Disciples and Followers as such to meddle with the outward Government of the Nations: And truly the dismal effects this has produced, both to the ruine of Christianity and Civil Government, may convince those that are not byassed by particular Interest, (as all Clergymen, both *Pope*, *Prelate* and *Presbyter* generally are) and love the good and advancement either of Christianity or Civil Government, that it is high time to avoid this snare.

To this the state of the *Jews* is usually objected, whose Religion and Government was mixed together: But that saying of Christ abovementioned is thereunto a sufficient Answer, for they had an outward Kingdom, which Christ came not to establish, neither for himself nor Followers; and theirs related to a particular Race or Family, which is not the case now: besides that their outward Policy was by Revelation expressly given them of God, who gave them Rulers, Judges, Kings, oftentimes by the particular appointment of his Prophets, without respect either to hereditary Right, or the choice of the People; and unless we would plead for the like thing now, which none I know of do, I mean of those that strive for the Government, there can be nothing rationally urged from the state of the *Jews* in this matter.

But some may be apt to say, that there is a necessity that Religion and Policy be interlaid, because those things are a part of Religion, which are of absolute necessity to Government; such as the suppressing of *Murther*, *Adultery*, *Theft*, *Perjury*, which surely belongs to the Magistrates to punish. To this I answer, It is true it belongs to the Magistrate to punish such like crimes; but as these things are contrary to the Law of God, and such as Religion strikes against, so they are injurious to Civil Society, and tend to destroy it; and therefore come under the Magistrates cognizance in this respect, or under this reduplication, and not upon the mere Religious account; for whatever is destructive or injurious to Civil Society, comes to be punished by the Magistrate upon that score, without respect to its concern in Christianity: as we see these things were punishable by the Magistrates in all well-regulated Kingdoms and Commonwealths among the Heathens, where they

they could not be considered as any part of the Christian Religion. Not that I deny, where both Magistrate and People are Christian, and agreed in the acknowledgment that such things are not only hurtful to Civil Society, but destructive to their immortal Souls, he may improve that reason to deterr the people from these evils, as also to bear home to them the justice of the punishment: but this he doth not as a Magistrate, but as a Christian, even as such Magistrates among the Heathens as were Philosophers sometimes used to do.

To this I suppose it may be also readily objected, That according to this Principle both Papists, Presbyters, Anabaptists, yea such as were *John of Leyden* and his Complices, may and ought to be tolerated, if the Magistrate has nothing to do with the Consciences of his Subjects: And again, if the Magistrate should become any of these, the People ought quietly to bear it. To this I answer, and indeed herein the excellency of this fundamental Principle both in Religion and Government will appear, That Popery has two parts, the one is that which is meerly Religious, that is, which relates properly to Religion or Conscience, and are peculiar to them, such as the believing Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Adoration of Saints and Images, yea and the Superiority of the Bishop of Rome over other Churchmen, as they call them; all which, and those of this kind, may be believed and professed without prejudice to Civil Society, and as being matters meerly relating to Conscience, come not properly under the Magistrates cognizance. The other part is the opinion of the Popes power over Princes and States, his absolving the people from their Obedience, his giving them Dispensations to kill and destroy them, and allowing them not to keep Faith to Hereticks, and such like; which as they are destructive to Government, are truly no part of Religion, but a politick contrivance long hatched by the Bishops of *Rome* and his Dependants, for establishing to himself a firm Monarchy in the World, and therefore ought to be guarded against and punished by the Magistrate, not as Errors in Religion, but as destructive to the Government. If it be said, all Papists believe and profess, and are ready to practise these things: To that I say, then in so far they are lyable and ought to be punished, and not tolerated. But let the reason of our procedure & sentence against them be, not their opinion in things meerly Religious, but their destructiveness to Civil Government. Thus if we go upon this sound Principle, we shall preserve the honour of the truly Christian & Protestant Cause, and take away from them all occasion of glorying in their sufferings, or of strengthning themselves against Protestants in Popish Countries, who live peaceably, and hold no such Principles as oblige them to make any disturbance in the Government. The like may be said of all others called Sectaries, whom the Magistrate is to restrain only in so far as they hold principles, or bring forth practices that are destructive to the Government. As to the second part of the objection, relating to the Magistrate, I answer, such are either Elective, or Hereditary; if Elective, there is no place for the objection, because the Electors have access to chuse men of such Principles as they like best; if Hereditary, it is either absolute, or limited; if there be any such express limitation, as excludes men of such and such Principles, then the case is solved; if not, the former distinction will hold: Let the Magistrate entertain such Principles as best likes him, in matters that are purely Religious; but if he will entertain such as are destructive to the Government, by which he infringes the privileges of the people, and will rob them of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, meerly upon the account of Religion, certainly they have great reason to beware how they come under such a Yoak, which they can do without any blemish, and with full justification in the face of the Nations, since they deny not the Magistrate the exercise of his Religion for himself: and herein the people also may be sufficiently secured, whatever be the Magistrates Religion, if thus bounded, as in the application to the state of things here in *England*, and *Scotland* also, will appear, to which I now proceed.

It is to be considered, that these Nations having been long involved in a Civil War, through which a new people (not formerly, or but little known) have grown up, who as men have or ought to have an interest in the same Immunities, Freedoms and Privileges with the rest, as to Civil things at least; for else in *England* the Papist might plead *Magna Charta*, that all but they ought to be extruded the Nation, or be lyable to such troubles as might make it too hot for them to stay in; and so in *Scotland* and *Ireland*, if not by the same, yet by other *medium*s: so that as to the Spiritual Constitution, or the Civil Government of these Nations as to Spiritual things the Laws have not been as those of the *Medes* and *Persians*, but have received alterations according to the necessity and conveniency of times; that those who have given the Law, and to and for whose favour, for whose protection the Laws were expressly made, had them turned against them, and for the protection of those against whom the Laws were made.

Since the coming in of the King that now is, (after a long Civil intestine War, as hath been said) that which hath been set up paramount over and above all, hath been that of *Bishops*, or *Episcopacy*, to the utter suppression of all others; with all strenuous endeavours to strengthen and propagate that Profession, and drive on an Uniformity, which how ineffectual it hath hitherto been, all may see, as may appear by the Kings Declaration in the year 1672. and though a considerable time hath since intervened, it may still be seen there was good reason for the import of that Declaration, whereby the Ship of these Nations hath been tossed and lyable to great hazards, through the tumultuating humours, furmises, discontents of the severals concerned, in being lyable to be out of the protection of the Law; so that upon these accounts, and the concurring circumstances that either have been, or might have been artificially managed to blow the Coal; I say, considering the combustible matter, it is to me matter of acknowledgment and admiration, that things have not run unto confusion long ere now: And truly my hope is, that God Almighty intends better things for these Nations, then that one size or sort of people should be set up in matters of Religion, to the utter ruinating and undoing of all others; or that thereby through the impatience of man, (to whom it is hard to bear to have his Spiritual and Civil Liberties snapt away at once) or through the artifice of them who upon other grounds of discontent, may make use of this to blow these Nations into a flame, which God forbid, my hope and desire is rather, that those in Authority may consider as Christians and prudent men, how to land the Ship in a safe Harbour. First, how as Christians they are not concerned to meddle in this matter; that is, that Christianity lays no obligation upon the Magistrate to establish any form of the Christian Religion by Law, is above shewn: so that such do say nothing to the purpose, who land this debate (as most of the Clergy do) in recurring to the Laws in force, saying, *So it stands by Law, so it is settled by Law*, for the Law was no less strong in Q. *Maries* days for Popery, then now for that which is set up. Next, if it stand upon a meer prudent prudential politick foot, and so be settled by the Laws of these Nations, I apply my self in the second place to consider, how far it is truly suitable to prudence, how far it is prudential for the Magistrates of these Nations, how far it is good policy in them to *own*, assert, lay claim to such a power, as things are circumstantiated especially; that is to say, to set up by Law any form of Christian Religion, and by the Civil Power and Authority to stand by the Professors of it, to the depressing, exterminating, discountenancing, crushing and discouraging of all others: I say, this seems to me not only to be Antichristian, but Antiprudential, Antipolitical, and a thing of a wonderful dangerous consequence, and impracticable for any long continuance, without the hazarding of all, for these Reasons.

It is not prudential for Magistrates to keep alive Seeds of discord, emulation, strife, among the people over whom they rule, for this but narrows his or their power, instead of enlarging it; for as this engages those who are countenanced, so it alienates more or less all those who are discountenanced, or is lyable to do so. Besides all the several other dissenting Judgments in these Nations, there are three sorts that lay claim to the Magistrates espousing them and their way, as that which he is obliged to do in a National way; and all these three lay claim for the limits of their Church to be as broad and long at least as the Nation, to wit, the *Popish*, *Prelatical*, and *Presbyterian*; all these pretend to be diametrically opposite to each other, and each of them have had the advantage to get the Magistrate on their side, and to be settled by Law; publick places and publick maintenance have belonged to them. Thus even the Democratical Government of *Presbytery*, could cry out on all meddlers with Church-Lands, but especially Tithes, as Sacrilegious persons. Now this hath been especially the Bone of Contention among these three; it was not, nor is not meerly that any of them should be owned to be the Church and Ministry of Christ only, or before all others, but that they should be set above all others, so as to have the maintenance and respective priviledges due to Holy Church. Now were it prudential to set up any of these three, as the present condition and complexion of the Nations are? I say, Nay; as for the *Papists*, they are a diminutive Sect to the rest of the Nation respectively, though upon all other accounts they stood upon an equal foot with the rest differing from them, as I have shewn before they do not: as to those of the *Episcopal way*, such as truly are engaged in their Judgments to that way, are not much more considerable then they, so that they will be found but a diminutive Sect also: so that to establish them, and drive a Conformity to them, hath been hitherto but to go against Wind and Tide, because the sence of the people (though upon differing accounts) hath been and is against them: as to the *Presbyterians*, it is to be confessed they are more considerable then both the other for number, though not of one Judgment among themselves, albeit all agreeing

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that they ought to be set up, owned and countenanced by the Magistrate, and he to be subservient to them, not to be the Head of the Church, that is lodged in the General Assembly: yet in prudence it is not fit a foot large enough for the Magistrate to rest upon, so as to crush down all others; for they, taken as all of one Judgment, will be found but a diminutive Sect, put in the ballance with all others, to wit, the other two beforementioned, and the rest of the dissenters in the Nation. And as they are a people positive and peremptory, and lyable to fall in differences among themselves, as was manifest in *Scotland* about the year 1650. it will be no less hard to satisfie them, then they to satisfie one another; however this will be the *minimum quod sic*, that all others must be crushed and born down, so as it will be found hard to please them, for they will be found to grow in their Encroachments and Demands, and it will not be found so easie a matter, whatever cause or occasion should be found for it, to limit or stop them once being set upon as they that are less considerable: neither do I see it prudential for the Magistrate to countenance any of these, so as to give them the sole countenance of Publick Authority, as to Church-Power, as it hath been called and accounted the National Church, & so these to have Publick Authority and Maintenance, and Priviledge according to Law, & the rest only to be tolerated and connived at, for this is only to keep up the Bone of Contestation, that as opportunity serves they in the Saddle may be unhorsed, and they that are stronger get into their room: For it is never to be reckoned of, that the Papists though they had their Liberty by way of toleration or connivance, as the rest of dissenters, will be satisfied so long as they see Law countenance them that separated from them, and those in the possession of their Mass-houses and Maintenance, that were originally settled upon and consecrated by their Church, and which as to its original had its rise from their Church? Or is it to be reckoned upon that the Presbyters, whatever countenance or toleration were granted them, though settled by Law, would be satisfied while excluded from the Publick Places and Maintenance? and they being the stronger, and a growing Interest, would still be lying at catch to be imagain: were it not then good Christianity in the Magistrates, who profess themselves to be Christians, to deny themselves in giving to Christ Jesus that which is his due only, that is, to be Head in and over his Church, and leave the Government to him, and get their hands out of this Thorny matter, that hath produced nothing to themselves but trouble, without which these Nations can never be firmly settled; I am bold to say, and were it not good prudence so to do. What hath been the *Fama clamosa* for many years of old, and of late before the War, and since the coming in of the King, and is so at this day? *Popery! Arbitrary Government!* there hath a Jealousie entred the minds of people concerning these things; could a better way be found out to pluck up these surmises by the Roots, then if all concern'd would shew a willingness and ready compliance, and contribute to it in their respective places and stations, that it might be fundamentally settled and established as a Basis never to be shaken, that all Christian men should be left to the Government of the Law of Jesus, to worship him and serve him, as they shall find themselves by him obliged; the Magistrate not at all to meddle or intermeddle therein, further then to see that this be kept among all, so that no man nor men may be imposed upon in the matters of Religion, within the bounds of his Jurisdiction, by any outward force or violence; nor his Authority be made use of to confirm any Spiritual sentence more or less, but as every one hath been or may be perswaded to joyn themselves to any sorts of people, upon a Spiritual or Christian account, they may be left so to do in matters meerly and only relating to Conscience, and that all Laws to the contrary may be utterly and totally abolished; and as to all other things, every one from the least to the greatest to be subject to the Civil Laws of the Nation, and that Order and Good Government among men may be established, and that none under whatsoever pretence may plead Immunity from subjection to the Laws, in such things that come properly and unquestionably under the Civil Magistrates cognizance; so that he may be an encouragment to those that do well, and a terror to evil doers, that good and wholesom Laws may be made by those to whom it is proper so to do, for establishing the Rights and Properties of men as men, and for encouraging Sobriety; and this is proper for the Magistrate.

But what will become of Holy Church, will some say? She will be where she was, for the Magistrate withdrawing his hand, leaving every profession and way to stand upon its own legs, Unchurches neither *Papists*, *Episcopalians*, nor *Presbyterians*, they are a Church still, if they were so before. But saith the Bishops and Hierarchy, What shall become of us? if the Magistrate withdraw his hand, where shall we have Maintenance? where shall we have a place to Preach in? Ye shall have no less advantage or ground to stand in then those that relate to other people, that account themselves to have Ministers, and to be Churches; yea this advantage you have above all them, that you have had 18 or 19 years Places and

Benefices,

Benefices, so you may the Heads [illegible] will [illegible] the benevolence of your People, which is all the Church will have as will impose, so you both all stand on an equal foot; and it's fit they should for the publick Peace sake, and the publick Maintenance hath been the Bone of Contention in [illegible] and will be found to stand upon the same foot with Abbeys and Nunneries and Church Lands. The latter originally was honest and good, and from such As the one [illegible] was removed and utterly abolished, as the publick necessity and convenience, was removed and utterly abolished, as the publick necessity and convenience, and so may these, if ever the [illegible] through settlement; the Church-Lands of a suitable care given to the Tenants, applied to the Revenue of the Crown, and annexed thereto for ever inviolably, a means [illegible] Chapters and Deans [illegible], and such as have been accounted to the right and possessors of the several Churches respectively. The Tithes have been a great oppression upon the people of this Nation, and would be absolutely extinguished both as to name and thing, so as there may be no footsteps of them; and that no man of whatsoever [illegible] Parish [illegible] may be liable to have another to have an Interest in his Tithe, which hath been a great bondage and servitude, and had its Interest upon the account that they belonged originally to the Church and to their Patrimony. Now things being settled upon another foundation, and a competent [illegible] by the prudence and care of those to whom to be [illegible] with a favourable regard every way to the [illegible] especially upon this account, and the Rights of men, as men, may be [illegible] and [illegible] and expedient found out to give some competent satisfaction, suitable to the Rights and Possessions of Impropriators, so as henceforward the Stock and Tribe may [illegible] confounded and involved, that whoever hath the Property of Possessions of Lands may never be liable to any such bondage more or less, by the [illegible] of the Bishops, and other Church Lands not already disposed of into the possession of the laity, [illegible] there shall be a considerable addition of Revenue to the Crown, and the [illegible] to the people of these Nations will be gratified, in removing the great oppression and [illegible] of Tithes, the cause of Contention will be removed, and every foot and foot of people will stand upon their own legs; all unreasonable expectations of setting up one sort of men, and throwing down all the rest, will be over; all fears and jealousies, and animosities upon this account will cease, and hereby that which hath been a standing sore and [illegible] upon the people of these Nations, will be plucked up by the Roots.

It is [illegible] What shall become of the Magistrate or Magistrates, things being thus settled? What were the hazards for me to [illegible] unreasonable that the Magistrate or Magistrates should be in worse case than the People, who ought to be left to their absolute liberty as to the matter of Religion, without being liable to any Civil inconvenience, or abridgment of any privilege upon that account of their [illegible] of Religion, merely as such? then why not the Magistrate also, being [illegible] settled, and [illegible] would be? and is natural it should be, that except in his or their Family or Chaplain, and that in a temporary way, it should not be in the power of the Magistrate or Magistrates, to make any standing Maintenance, or settlement upon any sort of Incumbent Orders, or to set them up or countenance them; further than by the [illegible] being [illegible] persuasion, or allowing them on such account entertainment as Chaplains to add him for clearing the people of these Nations of the aforementioned seeds of jealousie, it is fundamentally fenced as a *Magna Charta* for ever, that whosoever in the Magistrate or Magistrates [illegible] shall be found to the contrary, shall be [illegible] and [illegible] judged by this Law, as guilty of Treason against the Fundamentals of the Government, *Jure Divino*, and *Jure humano Supremo*; and that whatever either separately or in conjunction, shall go against this Basis or Fundamental settlement, were it a single person, or the Parliament, shall [illegible] Parliament, and their Orders become void and null. For the Fundamentals are not to be [illegible], even than the Magistrate, or Magistrates, is to be wholly for but as shall [illegible] in matters of Religion, but every man as to the Magistrates interposing [illegible] and be left free; and that all ingenuous men born Freemen, not having forfeited their Liberty by doing those things which makes them obnoxious, shall be secure in their Persons and Estates from all Arbitrary proceedings; which will truly be for the honour and great [illegible] of the Magistrate or Magistrates, and safety of the People.

The Reasons being such that have, to be Dogmatical, are therefore only modestly proposed, and humbly submitted to those of more mature Judgment and greater Experience, especially the next approaching Parliament, by him who in truth can subscribe himself

Philo-Britannicus.

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